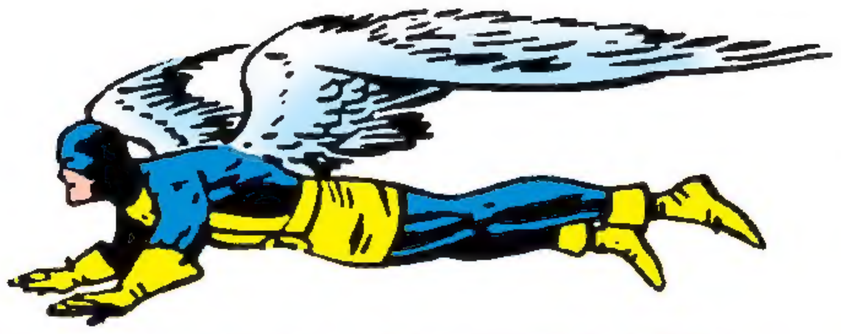
MARVEL COMICS GROUP

12¢

the X-MEN



APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

IND.

21 JUNE

WWW.MARVEL.COM

(c) 2009 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

X-MEN! THE MOST UNUSUAL FIGHTING TEAM OF ALL TIME!

"FROM WHENCE COMES... DOMINUS?"

THE SHIP! IT'S CHANGED DIRECTION! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THAT BLINDING SHAFT OF LIGHT! IT APPEARED IN FRONT OF US--FROM OUT OF NOWHERE! WHAT IS IT, PROFESSOR?

:OOPS!: WATCH THE KNEE THERE, WARRY BOY!

I'M--NOT SURE! BUT, IT'S SURROUNDED BY SOME SORT OF FORCE FIELD--TOSSING THE PLANE ABOUT AS IF IT WERE A FEATHER!

WHAT AN UNGRACEFUL POSE FOR THE AGILE BEAST TO ASSUME! SOMETHING IS OBVIOUSLY AMISS!

IT MUST BE THE WORK OF... LUCIFER!

EXEMPLARY EDITING BY: STAN LEE

EXTRAORDINARY WRITING BY: ROY THOMAS

EXCEPTIONAL ART BY: JAY GAVIN

EXHILARATING INKING BY: DICK AYERS

EXASPERATING LETTERING BY: ARTIE SIMEK

HAVING PINPOINTED THE LOCATION OF THEIR MYSTERIOUS FOE, THE SINISTER LUCIFER, PROFESSOR XAVIER AND HIS SUPER-POWERED PROTEGES ARE RAPIDLY APPROACHING HIS DESERT CITADEL--WHEN, WITHOUT WARNING, A BEAM OF PULSATING LIGHT MATERIALIZES DIRECTLY IN THEIR PATH! BUT, IF YOU WANNA KNOW ANY MORE, YOU'VE GOTTA LEARN IT THE HARD WAY! READ ON, TIGER...

(c) 2009 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

THE NEXT MOMENT, AS THE PROFESSOR REGAINS CONTROL OF THE SMALL PRIVATE CRAFT, A NEW AND EVEN MORE STARTLING PHENOMENON GREETS THE EYES OF THE STUNNED MUTANTS...

LOOK! THAT BEAM SEEMS TO BE EMANATING FROM AN OPENING IN THE *SKY* ITSELF!

AND THAT'S NOT *ALL!* *LOOK!*

INSIDE THE SHAFT --MOVING AT INCREDIBLE SPEED-- SOME KIND OF MASSIVE *SHAPES*, STREAKING DOWN TOWARDS THAT *BUTTE!* WHAT CAN THEY *BE?*

BUT, NOT EVEN THE TRAINED MINDS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY *X-MEN*, UNDAUNTED BY THE DIREST OF THREATS, CAN HOPE TO FORESEE THE ULTIMATE, MIND-STAGGERING MENACE WHICH THESE OMINOUS FORMS PORTEND!

I HAVE NO IDEA OF THE EXACT NATURE OF THOSE SHAPES, BOBBY! BUT, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THEY ARE RELATED TO THE *THREAT* WHICH THE EVIL LUCIFER POSES TO ALL MANKIND!

WHAT DO WE DO *NOW*, PROFESSOR? GO DOWN AND INVESTIGATE?

IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, ANGEL! BUT FIRST --*DAWN* IS BREAKING, AND I WANT TO OBSERVE THIS AREA BY *SUNLIGHT* BEFORE LANDING!

FOR, WE ARE NOW PREPARING TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY IN HIS *OWN LAIR* --AND IT IS ALWAYS *THERE* THAT HE IS MOST *DANGEROUS!*

MEANWHILE, NEARBY, OTHER EYES AS WELL HAVE WITNESSED THE AWESOME SIGHT!

THERE IT IS AGAIN-- THAT SAME LIGHT WE SAW *LAST NIGHT!*

SOMEHOW I HAD ME A *HUNCH* THAT WASN'T THE LAST WE'D SEE OF IT!

WHAT CAN IT *BE*, MR. MACK? I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHIN' LIKE IT BEFORE!

I DON'T KNOW, SMITH---BUT I SURE INTEND TO *FIND OUT!* C'MON, LET'S GO!

PORTER MACK DUDE RANCH

CONSIDERIN' THE LACK OF ROADS NEAR *BUCHANAN'S BUTTE*, WHERE THE LIGHT CAME FROM, THESE HORSES'LL DO US A LOT MORE GOOD THAN THE *STATION WAGON!*

AND WE'RE NOT COMIN' BACK TILL WE GET TO THE *BOTTOM* OF THIS! A THING LIKE THIS COULD DRIVE ALL THE CUSTOMERS AWAY FROM MY *DUDE RANCH!*

WE'RE WITH YUH ALL THE WAY, MR. MACK!

I'M GONNA FIND OUT WHO'S USIN' THOSE PHONY SCIENCE FICTION GIMMICKS ON *MY PROPERTY!*

BUT, WHILE THE ANGRY DUDE RANCHER WORRIES ABOUT POSSIBLE LOSS OF BUSINESS, THE NEARBY X-MEN HAVE A FAR MORE *CRUCIAL* PROBLEM AT HAND...

THE SHAFT OF LIGHT--IT *VANISHED*, JUST AS THE FIRST RAYS OF *DAWN* APPEARED! THERE'S JUST A WISP OF *SMOKE* COMING FROM THE TOP OF THAT BUTTE NOW!

THOSE ARE *OPALESCENT GASES*, JEAN! THEY ARE INTENDED, I SUSPECT, TO SHIELD SOMETHING *BENEATH* THEM FROM DETECTION FROM THE AIR!

THEREFORE, WE MUST DROP LOWER FOR A *CLOSER VIEW!*

SUDDENLY...

YEESH! WHAT WAS *THAT?*

ERUPTING GEYSERS OF TREMENDOUS FORCE --AND *MAN-MADE*, I'M CERTAIN!

SSSHHHH!

IF EITHER OF THEM HAD STRUCK THE PLANE DIRECTLY, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN *DESTROYED!*

SSSHHHH!

Y'KNOW, I'M ALMOST BEGINNIN' TO THINK THAT OUR OLD BUDDY DOESN'T *WANT* US TO FIND HIM!

ON OCCASION, MY SNOWBOUND SIDEKICK, YOUR *FRIGIDITY* IS EQUALLED ONLY BY YOUR *PERSPICACITY!*

BUT, PROFESSOR, ARE YOU POSITIVE YOUR *BEAM-DISTORTER HELMET* WILL ADEQUATELY SHIELD YOU FROM POSSIBLE MENTAL ATTACK BY *LUCIFER?*

I MUST TAKE THAT *CHANCE*, HANK! LUCIFER MUST BE *STOPPED!*

PROFESSOR! I THINK I SEE OUR TICKET INTO LUCIFER'S HIDEOUT-- *DIRECTLY BELOW!*

YES, CYCLOPS --I THINK YOU'RE *RIGHT!*

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING BELOW-- EXCEPT A *RIVER!*

PRECISELY, ANGEL! AND IT'S THAT VERY *RIVER* WHICH, AS SCOTT OBSERVED, MAY HELP US SURPRISE OUR FOE!

NOTE HOW THE WATER BELOW FLOWS *TOWARDS* THE BUTTE--AND, NOT FAR FROM IT, DIS-APPEARS *UNDERGROUND!*

NOW I GET IT! HE'D NEED A BIG WATER SUPPLY LIKE THAT RIVER TO OPERATE THOSE *GEYSERS!*

CORRECT! AND SO, WE MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE HIM UNAWARES BY *FOLLOWING* THAT RIVER WHEN IT GOES UNDER GROUND--AND INTO THE VERY *CITADEL* OF LUCIFER!

AUTOMATIC PILOT *ON!* PREPARE FOR *HOVERCRAFT* LOWERING!

THEN...

I'LL SAY *THIS*, PRO-FESSOR! THIS NEW GO-BUGGY IS EVEN NIFTIER THAN MY *SPORTS CAR!*

BEASTIE BOY, DID YOU EVER NOTICE THE TINY SIGNS OF *MATERIALISM* IN WARREN'S CHARACTER?

BE KIND, LAD! BESIDES, YOU'RE BEGIN-NING TO SOUND LIKE *ME!*

JEAN--YOU'VE BEEN SO *SILENT!* IS ANYTHING WRONG?

WHY, NO-- OF COURSE NOT!

HE *NEVER* PAYS ANY ATTENTION TO ME--UNLESS HE THINKS THERE'S SOMETHING *WRONG!*

QUIET, EVERYONE! WE'RE *LANDING* NOW!

SECONDS LATER, ON A PLATEAU ABOVE THE TURBULENT RIVER...

FROM HERE ON, YOU WILL HAVE TO CARRY ON WITHOUT ME! HOWEVER, I'LL BE FOLLOWING YOUR EVERY MOVE BY *MENTAL TELE-PATHY!*

WE'LL TRY NOT TO LET YOU DOWN, SIR!

WE *MUST* CAPTURE LUCIFER --TO CLEAR OUR OWN NAMES!*

YES, WARREN! BUT, UNLESS I'M GREATLY *MISTAKEN*, THERE IS MUCH, MUCH *MORE* AT STAKE THAN MERELY THE REPUTATION OF THE *X-MEN!* SO-- BE *CAREFUL!*

I ASSURE YOU, SIR, ALL DUE CAUTION WILL BE EXERCISED!

WELL, BOBBY-- SHALL WE?

AFTER *YOU*, TWINKLE-TOES!

*LAST ISH, LUCIFER HAD *UNUS* AND THE *BLOB* FRAME OUR HAPLESS HEROES, REMEMBER?
-- FORGET-ME-NOT STAN!

WHILE YOU FOUR DESCEND, I'LL SCOUT AROUND ABOVE!
GANGWAY, ALL! THE ICEMAN COMETH!
MY TELEKI-NETIC POWERS WILL LOWER ME!
WATCH IT, BEAST! YOU MIGHT FALL AND HURT YOURSELF!
TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE, CYCLOPS!
YOU CLIMB DOWN YOUR WAY, AND I'LL SCRAMBLE DOWN MINE!

THEN, AS HE SWOOPS THROUGH THE CRISP MORNING AIR, THE HIGH-FLYING ANGEL SPIES...
OH OH! WHAT'S THIS? A RECEPTION COMMITTEE FROM LUCIFER?
AND YET--THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE THE TYPE OF GUYS THAT HE'D HANG AROUND WITH!
HEADS UP! IT'S ONE OF THE X-MEN!

I HEARD ON THE RADIO WHERE THEY'RE WANTED, BACK EAST!
OH, GREAT! LOOKS LIKE IT'S OPEN SEASON ON MUTANTS AGAIN! I'D BETTER WARN THE OTHERS!
GIVE 'IM A BLAST! MAYBE THERE'S A REWARD!
KRAK!
SCARE 'IM DOWN, YOU FOOLS! HURRY!
WE--CAN'T, BOSS! HE'S TOO FAST!

THE NEXT MOMENT, AS THE REWARD-HAPPY HORSEMEN ROUND A BEND IN THE CANYON...
MARVEL GIRL! BEAST! LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU!
IT'S THE ANGEL--HE'S WARNIN' HIS PALS!
BUT HE'S TOO LATE--'CAUSE I'VE GOT THE DROP ON 'EM!
HANDS UP, YOU TWO!
BUT--WHO ARE YOU? AND WHY--?
THERE ARE TIMES, LADY, WHEN QUESTIONS HAD BEST BE PRECEDED BY ACTION--AND I THINK THIS IS JUST SUCH AN OCCASION!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, BEAST! STILL, I WISH I KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON!
THERE! THAT OUGHT TO KEEP YOU OUT OF MISCHIEF FOR A SECOND!
WH--? CAN'T SEE!
WHAT ARE THE REST OF YOU MISERABLE COYOTES DOIN'? GRAB 'EM! WHAT DO I PAY YOU FOR, ANYWAY?

SORRY, MISTER! YOUR MEN WOULD LIKE TO HELP YOU OUT, BUT THEY'VE GOT OTHER THINGS ON THEIR MINDS JUST NOW!
NOW, SUPPOSE THE WHOLE LOT OF YOU CALM DOWN FOR A SECOND, AND TELL US WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
FRAP!
DUCK! HE'S SPLATTERIN' ROCKS AT US!

NEXT, AS CYCLOPS TURNS HIS AWESOME RAY ON THE LEDGE ITSELF...

HELP! WE'RE FALLIN' INTO THE RIVER!

MAYBE WE'RE SAFER DOWN HERE!

WAIT! WHERE'RE YOU NO-GOODS GOIN'? COME BACK!

SORRY, MR. MACK, BUT WE GOT US SOME BUSINESS BACK IN TOWN!

SO--YER RUNNIN' OUT ON ME, EH? YER FIRED, THE WHOLE BUNCH'A YA!

THAT'S OKAY WITH US! AT LEAST, WE'RE STILL AROUND TO COLLECT UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE!

THEN, AS THE WATER-LOGGED WESTERNERS PULL THEMSELVES ASHORE...

LET 'EM GO! WHO NEEDS 'EM? I DIDN'T WIN THE BLUE VALLEY SHARP-SHOOTIN' CONTEST FOR NOTHIN'!

I'LL TAKE CARE'A THOSE BLASTED MUTIES BY MYSELF!

IN FACT, I THINK I'M ABOUT TO GET MY CHANCE RIGHT NOW!

WHAT A BREAK! THERE'S THE ONE CALLED ICEMAN--AND HE DOESN'T SEEM TO KNOW I'M HERE!

LOOKS LIKE YOU TOOK THE FIGHT OUT OF 'EM, CYKE! THEY'RE MOVIN' OUT!

I'LL JUST WING 'IM--AND FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

OH NO YOU DON'T, MISTER--!

THANKS, BUDDY--BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME HANDLE HIM?

LET'S JUST SAY I GOT TIRED OF EVERY-BODY AND HIS BROTHER TAKING POT-SHOTS AT US!

THE ANGEL! I FORGOT ABOUT HIM!

HERE'S THE LEADER OF OUR GUN-HAPPY PLAYMATES, ICEMAN! NOW, THE QUESTION IS--WHAT DO WE DO WITH HIM?

I DEMAND YOU PUT ME DOWN, YOU CRIMINAL! I'M THE OWNER OF THIS LAND!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU CROOKS ARE UP TO WITH THAT BEAM OF LIGHT OF YOURS, BUT YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH IT!

CROOKS, HUH? IT LOOKS LIKE NEWS OF THOSE NEW YORK ROBBERIES HAS SPREAD FAST!

WELL, WE CAN'T STOP TO EXPLAIN THINGS NOW! I'VE GOT AN IDEA--!

THERE! I'M SURE THE HORSE KNOWS THE WAY HOME--AND, BY THE TIME YOU GET THERE, THE ICE WILL BE MELTED!

MEANWHILE, WE'LL BE TRYING TO SAVE YOUR SAND-COVERED SPREAD--AND MAYBE ALL OF MANKIND, TO BOOT!

HOW'LL I EVER EXPLAIN THIS TO THE BOYS BACK AT THE DUDE RANCH?

THEN, THE TIME-CONSUMING INTERLUDE WITH THE HOT-TEMPERED DUDE-RANCHER ENDED, THE MARVELOUS MUTANTS SET TO WORK IN EARNEST...

THIS *ICE RAFT* YOU'RE FORMING, BOBBY, WILL CARRY US RIGHT INTO THE STRONGHOLD OF *LUCIFER!*

FINE! I CAN'T WAIT TO TACKLE THAT BEARDED BUM AGAIN!

PATIENCE, LAD! I HAVE A PREMONITION THAT YOU'LL GET YOUR *WISH!*

I ONLY HOPE THE *PROFESSOR* IS ALL RIGHT! I HATED LEAVING HIM *BEHIND!*

OKAY, GROUP--IT'S *READY!* NOW TO RELAX AND LET THE *RIVER* DO THE REST!

HURRY, ALL OF YOU! WE'LL BE DRIFTING INTO THE *SWIFT CURRENT* IN A SECOND!

COMING, FEARLESS LEADER!

HMMM! SCARCELY MY CONCEPTION OF A *LUXURY CRUISER*, BUT THIS IS NO TIME TO BE *FASTIDIOUS!*

MOMENTS LATER, THE SURGING WATERS THEMSELVES BEAR THE COURAGEOUS X-MEN DOWNSTREAM...

YOU KNOW, I'D FEEL A WHOLE LOT *BETTER* ABOUT THIS WHOLE MISSION IF WE HAD SOME KIND OF IDEA ABOUT WHAT LUCIFER IS *UP* TO!

SO WOULD WE *ALL*, ANGEL! BUT, *WHATEVER* HIS SCHEME, WE ARE SWORN TO *COMBAT* IT!

FAR BE IT FROM THE HUMBLE *BEAST* TO INTERRUPT YOUR RHETORICAL REFLECTIONS, BUT WE SEEM TO BE APPROACHING THE ENTRANCE TO THE *UNDERGROUND* SEGMENT OF THE RIVER!

AND, AS THE DARK, FOREBODING WALLS OF A SUBTERRANEAN CAVERN CLOSE MENACINGLY ABOUT THEM...

WHAT A *PLACE!* IF LUCIFER'S HIDEOUT *IS* AROUND HERE, I DON'T CARE MUCH FOR HIS *TASTE!*

YOU AND ME *BOTH*, BOBBY BOY!

QUIET, EVERYBODY! *LISTEN!* SOME STRANGE, MUFFLED *SOUND--*

AND I *CONCUR!* ONE ALMOST SUSPECTS THAT THE *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* IS HIS *INTERIOR DECORATOR!*

IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM--DIRECTLY *BENEATH* US!

BUT, BEFORE THE STARTLED TEEN-AGERS CAN ACT... *DISASTER!*

THE RAFT --IT'S *BREAKING UP!*

A MONSTROUS *WHIRLPOOL!* IT APPEARED *WITHOUT WARNING!*--PULLING US *DOWN!*

IT'S *LUCIFER!* HE KNOWS WE'RE HERE--AND HE'S TRYING TO *DESTROY* US!

MOST SAGACIOUS DEDUCTION, MY FEATHERED FRIEND! THE MIND POSITIVELY *BOGGLES* AT YOUR PRODIGIOUS POWERS OF PERCEPTION!

TRY TO STAY *TOGETHER!* IT'S OUR ONLY *CHANCE!*

NOW, IF YOU'LL ADVISE US HOW TO *ESCAPE*, WE'LL ALL VOTE FOR YOU FOR *CLASS PRESIDENT!*

DON'T FRET, MARVELITE! WE'LL PICK UP ON OUR MERRY, MISTREATED MUTANTS BEFORE YOU CAN SPELL *IRVING FORBUSH!* BUT, MEANWHILE, WHAT OF *PROFESSOR X,* WHO WAITS ANXIOUSLY ABOVE FOR SOME WORD OF SUCCESS...OR *FAILURE?*

THAT'S STRANGE--I LOST *TELEPATHIC CONTACT* WITH THEM WHEN THEY ENTERED THAT *UNDERGROUND TUNNEL!*

IT'S ALMOST AS IF SOME FANTASTICALLY POTENT FORCE SUDDENLY ERECTED A *MENTAL BARRIER* BETWEEN US! I MUST *PIERCE* IT--BEFORE IT'S *TOO LATE!*

THUS, COMPLETELY ABSORBED IN INTENSE CONCENTRATION, XAVIER FAILS TO DETECT TWO MASSIVE, INHUMAN FIGURES APPROACHING BEHIND HIM...

ATTENTION, X-MEN! REPORT AT ONCE! DO YOU *READ* ME?

IT'S NO *USE!* I'M TOO FAR AWAY TO CONTACT THEM--!

THE NEXT INSTANT...

ROBOTS! THEY'VE BOUND ME WITH SOME SORT OF *METAL BAND!* I CAN'T BREAK FREE--!

AND--THEY'RE IMMUNE TO MY MENTAL BLASTS! THEN--I'M *DEFENSELESS!*

SNAPP

OF COURSE! DID YOU HOPE TO CHALLENGE THE POWER OF *DOMINUS?*

COME, ROBOT *BETA!* WE SHALL BEAR THIS RELUCTANT PRIZE TO OUR MASTER!

IT SHALL BE DONE, ROBOT *ALPHA!*

PERHAPS THIS IS *BEST*--FOR ONLY IN THIS WAY COULD I GAIN ACCESS TO OUR FOE'S SANCTUM SANCTORUM!

BUT-- WHO IS *DOMINUS?*

WHOOOSH

WE HAVE CAPTURED THE *FIRST* OF THE ONE GROUP WHICH MIGHT ENDANGER OUR PLANS! SOON, WE SHALL ENSNARE THE *OTHERS* AS WELL!

THEN, THEY ARE STILL *FREE!* PERHAPS THEY WILL BE ABLE TO FATHOM LUCIFER'S MASTER PLAN--AND *STOP* HIM, WHILE THERE IS STILL *TIME!*

FOR, WHILE THE BREATH OF LIFE REMAINS IN *ONE X-MAN,* LUCIFER WILL NEVER BE FREE TO PERPETRATE NEW EVIL!

BUT, BELOW, IN CAVERNS MEASURELESS TO MAN*, AN EXULTANT LUCIFER SEES THINGS QUITE *DIFFERENTLY...*

NOW, WITH MY MOST FORMIDABLE FOE A HELPLESS CAPTIVE, THERE REMAINS ONLY TO DISPOSE OF HIS MEDDLESOME TEENAGE ALLIES! THEN--THE VICTORY IS *OURS!*

BUT FIRST, I MUST HASTEN TO THE MAIN CHAMBER TO GREET MY IMPLACABLE ENEMY--SO THAT I MAY FULLY *RELISH* MY LONG-AWAITED VICTORY!

*WHO *SAYS* THIS ISN'T THE MARVEL AGE OF QUALITY QUOTATIONS? --COLERIDGE-BUFF STAN.

AND, PRECISELY THIRTY SECONDS LATER, THE TWO DETERMINED ENEMIES ONCE AGAIN MEET, FACE TO FACE--AS THE FATE OF THE *EARTH* ITSELF HANGS PRECARIOUSLY IN THE BALANCE...

HERE, MASTER, IS THE EARTHLING YOU SENT US AFTER! DO YOU WISH US TO--*DISPOSE* OF HIM...*FOREVER?*

NO--FOR, I HAVE WAITED *TOO LONG* FOR THIS MOMENT TO COME--THE MOMENT WHEN HE WHO FOILED MY *FIRST* ATTEMPTS AT CONQUEST ON THIS PUNY PLANET NOW STANDS BEFORE ME IN *ABJECT DEFEAT!*

LOOK *AROUND* YOU, XAVIER! BEHOLD THE AWESOME, TOTALLY *INDESTRUCTIBLE* MACHINE KNOWN AS...*DOMINUS!* FOR, WITH THIS ULTRA-COMPLEX MECHANISM, I SHALL ENSLAVE YOUR ENTIRE *WORLD!*

DON'T BE TOO *CERTAIN* OF THAT! REMEMBER--- THERE ARE *OTHERS* WHO KNOW OF YOUR INSANE PLAN--MY *X-MEN* WILL STOP YOU IN YOUR TRACKS!

WILL THEY? I THINK NOT! REGARD THE LARGE *VISI-SCREEN* ON MY LEFT--AND SEE HOW *INEFFECTUAL* YOUR VAUNTED X-MEN ARE AGAINST THE POWER OF... *LUCIFER!*

THEN, OBSERVING THE SCREEN INDICATED BY HIS GLOATING CAPTOR, THE PROFESSOR SEES...

I'M *SAFE!* LUCKILY, MY *WINGS* ENABLED ME TO BREAK THE WHIRL-POOL'S GRIP!

BUT--WHAT OF *MARVEL GIRL* AND THE REST? I CAN'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO *THEM* --THEY'RE STILL DOWN BELOW!

THERE CAN BE ONLY *ONE CHOICE* FOR AN X-MAN! I MUST GO *BACK!*

NO MATTER *WHAT* DANGER LURKS BENEATH THESE SWIRLING WATERS, WE'LL FACE IT-- *TOGETHER!*

A SINGLE, MIND-RENDING SECOND THAT SEEMS AN ETERNITY--AND THEN...

MADE IT! I'M *UNDER* THE WHIRLPOOL--IN A HUGE *SUBTERRANEAN CAVERN!* FROM THE LOOKS OF ALL THESE *PIPES*, THIS MUST BE LUCIFER'S HEADQUARTERS!

AND--THERE'S *MARVEL GIRL* AND *CYCLOPS!*

HURRY, ANGEL! I--CAN'T HOLD ON--MUCH LONGER!

THERE YOU ARE--A LITTLE DAMP, BUT STILL INTACT! BUT, WHAT ABOUT *ICEMAN* AND THE *BEAST?*

THEY MUST'VE COME UP *ELSEWHERE* IN THIS CAVE! WE'VE GOT TO *FIND* THEM!

WAIT A MINUTE, *BOTH* OF YOU!

THERE'S SOME SORT OF *OPENING* RIGHT OVER THERE!

YEAH, I SEE IT, TOO! COULD IT BE THAT OUR MISSING BUDDIES GOT THERE *AHEAD* OF US? IT'S WORTH A *LOOK-SEE*, ANYWAY!

C'MON, CYKE--I'LL GIVE YOU A *LIFT!*

I ONLY PRAY THAT NOTHING HAS *HAPPENED* TO THEM!

IF THEY'VE BEEN *HARMED*, JEAN, THERE'S NO POWER OF *EARTH* THAT WILL PROTECT LUCIFER FROM US!

HOWEVER, AS THE GRIM TRIO SET FOOT UPON THE UNDERGROUND LANDING...

IT'S A *TRAP!* SOME SORT OF *TRANSPARENT CAGE* IS CLOSING ABOUT US!

QUICK, MARVEL GIRL! USE YOUR *TELEKINETIC POWER* TO FORCE THE WALLS *BACK!*

I--*CAN'T!* THE FORCE BEHIND THEM IS *TOO GREAT!* WE'RE *CAUGHT!*

THEN, ABRUPTLY, OUR SCENE SWITCHES TO WHERE THE BULKY *HANK McCOY* PLOWS DESPERATELY THRU THE MURKY WATERS...

MY LUNGS ARE *BURSTING!* THE VORTEX OF THE WHIRLPOOL HURLED ME DOWN TO THE VERY *BOTTOM* OF THIS RIVER!

I MUST SURFACE *SOON*--OR IT'S *BYE-BYE BEASTIE!*

A MOMENT LATER, THE ANTHROPOID X-MAN'S URGENT WISH IS GRANTED--OR *IS* IT?

=SPUTTER= MANY THANKS, FRIEND, FOR LENDING THE IMPERILED *BEAST* A HELPING HAND!

BUT--*WHAT* A HAND! I STRONGLY SUSPECT I HAVE GONE FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO THE *BLAST FURNACE!*

HERE IS ONE OF THE REMAINING MUTANTS, ROBOT *GAMMA*--THE ONE KNOWN AS THE *BEAST!*

A MOST UNGAINLY SPECIMEN! BUT--WHERE IS THE *OTHER* HUMAN STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR?

WHEREVER HE IS, *YOU'LL* NEVER LOCATE HIM!

AND, EVEN AS HANK STRUGGLES VAINLY TO FREE HIMSELF, THE *FIFTH* X-MAN ENTERS THE FRAY...

GOT TO HIT THAT OVER-SIZED GARBAGE PAIL WITH AN *ICY SURFBOARD* AT *FULL SPEED!*

OTHERWISE, THE BEAST AND I ARE *BOTH* IN HOT WATER!

I *DID* IT! THE IMPACT SENT THE ROBOT *SPRAWLING!*

BUT, WHAT ABOUT THE *OTHER* ONE?

KRA-A-CK!

MANY THANKS, ROBERT! YOUR ARRIVAL WAS MOST PROPITIOUS, INDEED!

ALLOW *ME* TO ATTEND TO OUR OTHER CLANKING COMPEER, IF YOU WILL!

THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY *FALL*--IF YOU'LL FORGIVE THE CAPRICIOUS CLICHE!

=UHHH--!=

KLAV!

I'LL TAKE YOUR *WORD* FOR IT! RIGHT NOW, LET'S MAKE OURSELVES *SCARCE*, PAL!

AS ALWAYS, LAD, OUR MINDS ARE *KINDRED SPIRITS!* LET'S RETREAT, INDEED!

Read more FREE comics on ReadComicOnline

LET'S *DEPART*, MR. DRAKE--BOY, WHILE THE DEPARTING'S *GOOD!*

THE NOBLE *BEAST* SHALL LEAD THE WAY!

I'M WITH *YOU*, MR. McCOY!

AND YET, IT ALMOST SEEMS AS IF OUR HAIRBREADTH ESCAPE WAS ACHIEVED *TOO EASILY*--

SUDDENLY...

LOOK OUT! UHHNN--!

A *METAL WALL*-- DROPPING INTO PLACE!

AND WE'RE ON A *COLLISION COURSE* WITH IT!

WHILE, IN THE VERY HEART OF LUCIFER'S SUBTERRANEAN STRONGHOLD...

OBSERVE, XAVIER, HOW *EASILY* I HAVE DISPOSED OF YOUR GROUP'S *THREAT* TO ME!

THUS SHALL YOUR ENTIRE *PLANET* FALL BEFORE THE MIGHT OF WE WHO TREAD THE *COSMOS* ITSELF!

THEN, IT'S *TRUE*--WHAT I ALWAYS *SENSED!*

LUCIFER IS AN *AGENT* OF SOME ALIEN, STAR-SPAWNED RACE!

STILL, THOUGH MY MIND CANNOT YET PIERCE THE *MENTAL SCREEN* WITH WHICH HE COMPLETELY SURROUNDS HIMSELF, PERHAPS I CAN *STILL* TRICK HIM INTO PROVIDING THE MEANS OF HIS OWN *DEFEAT!*

YOU *OVERESTIMATE* YOURSELF, LUCIFER! EARTH CANNOT BE CONQUERED BY A FEW GIMMICKS AND A HANDFUL OF ROBOTS!

SO--YOU WISH *FURTHER PROOF* OF OUR POWERS? THEN LISTEN-- WHILE I SPEAK OF *...DOMINUS!*

DOMINUS?

YES--FOR AGES NOW, MY RACE HAS PERFECTED IN *DOMINUS* A WEAPON OF INDESCRIBABLE POTENCY!

AND, THROUGH IT, THE ENTIRE *UNIVERSE* LIES WITHIN OUR REACH!

"EONS AGO, WE CREATED THE *ULTIMATE MACHINE*--*DOMINUS*--AS WELL AS THE COMPLEX ROBOTS NEEDED TO *OPERATE* IT...

"AND, WHILE YOUR *EARTH* WAS STILL A MASS OF FLOATING GASES, WE BEGAN TO EXTEND SWAY TO NEARBY WORLDS! ALWAYS THE PATTERN IS THE SAME...

"WE ESTABLISH OUR HEADQUARTERS IN SECRET ON THE UNSUSPECTING PLANET, AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE--WE *STRIKE!*

"SOON, YOUR WORLD--LIKE SO MANY BEFORE IT--SHALL BE BLANKETED BY RAYS DESIGNED TO TAKE AWAY THE *INDEPENDENT WILL* OF EVERYONE ON EARTH!"

IT WAS FOR THIS EXPRESS PURPOSE THAT THE IRRESISTIBLE MACHINE THAT WE CALL *DOMINUS*--AS WELL AS THE INDISPENSABLE ROBOTS THAT ALONE CAN *OPERATE* IT--WERE TELEPORTED TO EARTH THRU BEAMS OF IONIC LIGHT!

EVEN NOW, THE ROBOTS MAKE THE FINAL PREPARATIONS! SOON, YOU WILL WITNESS THE *END* OF MANKIND'S RULE ON EARTH!

YOU'RE *INSANE!* NO MERE *MACHINE* CAN POSSESS SUCH *AWESOME POWER!*

YOU STILL DO NOT BELIEVE? THEN, WATCH THIS SCREEN--AND SEE FOR *YOURSELF!*

"BEHOLD THE SCENE OF OUR *LAST* CONQUEST--A PLANET OF THE STAR *SIRIUS!* ONCE IT BOASTED A GREAT AND ADVANCED CIVILIZATION--NOW, ITS INHABITANTS SERVE US AS MERE *AUTOMATONS!*"

AND SO, WITH THAT ONCE-MIGHTY RACE NOW REDUCED TO SERVILE SLAVERY, *DOMINUS* HAS BEEN SENT *HERE!* SOON, YOUR PUNY SPHERE SHALL SHARE THE FATE OF COUNTLESS WORLDS *BEFORE* IT!

THUS IT SHALL *EVER* BE! FOR, IT IS OUR DESTINY TO *COMMAND!*

SO *THIS* IS THE MAD PLAN OF CONQUEST BEGUN A *DECADE* AGO--AND WHICH I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN I WAS DESTINED TO *COMBAT!*

IF EVEN *HALF* OF WHAT HE SAYS IS *TRUE*, EARTH COULD BE IN THE GREATEST DANGER IT'S EVER KNOWN!

WHILE ELSEWHERE IN THE VAST UNDERGROUND COMPLEX...

IT'S NO USE--I CAN'T BREAK FREE! WHAT ABOUT *YOU*, SCOTT?

NEGATIVE! LOOKS AS IF LUCIFER HAS US RIGHT WHERE HE *WANTS* US!

MY WINGS ARE *USELESS* IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS--BUT I MUST KEEP *TRYING!*

IF ONLY WE COULD RE-ESTABLISH MENTAL CONTACT WITH *PROFESSOR XAVIER!*

CYCLOPS, WHAT OF *ICEMAN* AND THE *BEAST?* WE HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE WE WERE SEPARATED BY THAT MAN-MADE *WHIRLPOOL!*

WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THEY ARE STILL *FREE*--AND THAT SOMEHOW *THEY* WILL BE ABLE TO SMASH LUCIFER'S PLAN--WHATEVER IT MAY BE!

WAIT! SOMEONE'S APPROACHING--*FAST!*

IT'S *BOBBY*--AND *HANK!* BUT, THEY'VE BEEN CAPTURED BY *GIANT ROBOTS!* WHAT ON EARTH--?

PUT THESE MORTALS INTO THE *COSMIC-CRYSTALLINE CUBE* WITH THE OTHERS!

HEAR THAT? MAYBE WE'LL GET OUR CHANCE *YET!*

CAREFUL, ANGEL! WAIT UNTIL THEY OPEN ONE SIDE OF OUR PRISON! THEN--

BUT, BEFORE THE X-MEN'S DEPUTY LEADER CAN FINISH...

UHNNN! WE'RE BEING HURLED *BACKWARDS!*

IT'S SOME SORT OF *INVISIBLE FORCE*--ACTIVATED AUTO-MATICALLY AS THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE CUBE OPENS!

WE SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN!* THEY'RE ONLY *TOYING* WITH US!

NOW TO--*HOLD!* WE ARE RECEIVING A MENTAL CALL FROM *LUCIFER!* HE DEMANDS OUR PRESENCE *AT ONCE!*

WE SHALL DEAL WITH THESE *LATER!*

THEY'RE TREATING US AS IF WE WERE MERE *CAGED ANIMALS*--TO BE DEALT WITH AT THEIR *LEISURE!*

PERHAPS THAT'S ALL WE *ARE*--TO *THEM!*

I ONLY HOPE THAT THE BEAST AND ICEMAN ARE *ALL RIGHT!* PERHAPS *TOGETHER* WE CAN MANAGE TO ESCAPE!

THEY SEEM TO BE UNHURT--ONLY *DAZED!* WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU TWO?

I'M NOT *SURE*, BUT I FEEL LIKE THE *LINCOLN TUNNEL* COLLAPSED ON ME!

MY SENSATIONS *PRECISELY*, MY COLLOQUIAL COLLEAGUE!

LOOK *ALIVE*, X-MEN! IT WOULD APPEAR WE'RE ABOUT TO GO ON A LITTLE *TRIP!*

THEN, AS A THIRD GARGANTUAN METAL FORM APPEARS...

I WAS SENT TO ESCORT THE PRISONERS TO A NEW LOCATION, WHILE YOU REPORT TO *LUCIFER!*

EXCELLENT, ROBOT *EPSILON!* BUT *HURRY*--FOR THE HOUR OF *ATTACK* GROWS NEAR!

OUR CAGE IS START-ING TO *MOVE!*

SOUNDS AS IF WE HAVEN'T MUCH *TIME* LEFT--WE MUST *DO* SOMETHING!

JEANIE, GIRL, THE BEGINNINGS OF A *PLAN* ARE TAKING COGENT SHAPE IN MY CALCULATING CRANIUM!

COULD YOU PROJECT A MINISCULE AMOUNT OF TELEKINETIC ENERGY *THRU* OUR GLASS CAGE?

I THINK I SEE WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND, HANK! I'LL...*TRY!*

ONE OF THE FIRST ROBOTS FLIPPED THAT TINY *LEVER* IN ORDER TO OPEN THE FRONT OF THIS CAGE!

PERHAPS--AS WE PASS *BY* IT--I CAN DO THE *SAME!*

KLIK!

YOU *DID* IT, MARVEL GIRL!

AND, AS THE FRONT OF THE TRANSPARENT PRISON SILENTLY LOWERS...

I THINK I'VE LOCATED A *WEAK POINT* ON THE ROBOT'S BACK!

IF I'M WRONG --WE'RE *DOOMED!*

ZAPT!

GOOD OLD CYCLOPS --ALWAYS THE VERY SOUL OF *OPTIMISM!*

YOU *GOT* HIM, SCOTT --BUT WILL YOUR BLAST *STOP* HIM?

THE NEXT MOMENT, THE HIGH-FLYING ANGEL GETS HIS ANSWER, AS THE MONSTROUS CREATURE TOPPLES LIFELESSLY TO THE FLOOR...

HE'S DOWN FOR THE COUNT! YOU MUST HAVE *SHORT-CIRCUITED* HIM!

ONE THING'S FOR SURE, CYKE--

A CHEERFUL CHARLIE YOU'RE *NOT!*

THIS IS NO TIME TO PAT OURSELVES ON THE BACK! WHO KNOWS HOW MANY *MORE* OF THESE THINGS ARE LURKING ABOUT?

LISTEN! WE SEEM TO HAVE SOME SORT OF *ALARM!*

EEEEEEEEEEEE

JUST OUR LUCK! KNOCKING OUT THAT *TIN-CAN TERROR* MUST'VE DONE IT!

WHATEVER THE REASON --WE'RE IN FOR IT *NOW!*

YOU'RE RIGHT--AND I'VE A HUNCH THE *REST* OF THEM WON'T GIVE ME SUCH A CLEAN *SHOT* AT THEM!

EEEEEEEEEEEE

LET'S GO! THE BOUNDING *BEAST* SHALL LEAD THE WAY!

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S JUST ONE WAY WE *CAN* GO--*FORWARD,* RIGHT INTO LUCIFER'S OWN *HEAD-QUARTERS!*

AND, IN THE CENTRAL CHAMBER, THE FATEFUL ALARM DOES NOT ESCAPE THE NOTICE OF AN ANGERED *LUCIFER*...

THAT IS THE SIGNAL THAT ONE OF YOUR FELLOW ROBOTS HAS BEEN *DISABLED*--DOUBTLESS BY THE INFERNAL *X-MEN!* GO--HUNT THEM DOWN--AND *SHOW NO MERCY!*

WE DO OBEY! THEY SHALL NOT ESCAPE US!

EEEEEEEE

EEEEE

MUST KEEP *PROBING*--DEEPER --*DEEPER!* FOR, THE FUTURE OF *HUMANITY* HANGS IN THE BALANCE!

SO, XAVIER--YOU PREFER TO PRETEND *INDIFFERENCE* TO THE FATE OF YOUR PRECIOUS MUTANTS!

THEN, KNOW *THIS*--I SHALL NO LONGER BE CONTENT MERELY TO *RECAPTURE* THEM!

THE X-MEN MUST BE *DESTROYED!*

MEANWHILE, FIVE GRIM FIGURES--TENSE BUT UNAFRAID IN THE MIDST OF MENACE--ARE APPROACHING EVER NEARER...

IT'S--*FANTASTIC!* WE SEEM TO BE WANDERING THRU *ENDLESS CORRIDORS* OF ULTRA-SCIENTIFIC MACHINERY!

ALL THAT'S MISSING IS *BORIS KARLOFF!*

HE MAY POP UP YET!

QUIET, EVERYBODY! TWO MORE *ROBOTS* --ZOOMING OUR WAY!

OUT OF SIGHT--*QUICK!*

THEN, ALMOST BEFORE THE WARY X-MEN CAN TAKE COVER...

=WHEW!= THOSE BABIES ARE TRAVELIN' LIKE THEY MEAN *BUSINESS!*

A MOST GRIEVOUS *UNDERSTATEMENT,* MISTER DRAKE!

WHEN DO WE STOP *HIDING*--AND START *FIGHTING?*

SOON, ANGEL--BUT NOT *YET!*

ZOOOM

X-MEN! THIS IS *PROFESSOR XAVIER!* YOU MUST DO AS I DIRECT--WITHOUT QUESTION! WITHOUT HESITATION!

GREAT! NOW WE'LL SEE SOME *ACTION!* WAIT'LL I GET MY HANDS ON *LUCIFER!*

WAIT! *LISTEN*--THERE'S *MORE!*

TELEPATHIC THOUGHTS--FROM THE *PROF!*

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MUST YOU ATTEMPT TO DAMAGE THE GIGANTIC MECHANICAL COMPLEX WHICH IS CALLED... *DOMINUS!*

DOMINUS? SO *THAT'S* IT! THIS IMMENSE *MACHINE* ITSELF IS THE *DANGER* TO EARTH WE'RE PLEDGED TO DEFEAT, RATHER THAN THE *ROBOTS!*

CHECK, CYKE, OLD BOY! AND HERE'S A PASSAGE WHICH LOOKS LIKE IT LEADS TO THE VERY *HEART* OF THAT MACHINE! LET'S SCRAMBLE THRU IT AND DO SOME *TUBE-SMASHING,* WHILE WE'VE STILL GOT THE *CHANCE!*

NO, ANGEL--THAT'S JUST WHAT THE PROFESSOR SAID WE *MUSTN'T* DO! HE MUST HAVE SOME SORT OF *PLAN*--!

BUT, HOW DO WE KNOW THAT MENTAL COMMAND *WAS* FROM THE PROF? AFTER ALL, WE LEFT HIM ON THE *SURFACE!*

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE *REST* OF YOU, BUT *THIS* HIGH-FLYIN' BIRD IS GONNA HAVE A *LOOK* AT THE MENACE CALLED *DOMINUS!*

ANGEL! *WAIT!*

WARREN'S *RIGHT*, SCOTT! LUCIFER MIGHT BE SOMEHOW *DUPLICATING* THE PROFESSOR'S TELEPATHIC THOUGHTS!

ANYWAY, CYKE, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE THE *CHANCE!*

THEN, EMERGING IN THE VERY CENTER OF THE COLOSSAL SUB-TERRANEAN COMPLEX, THE X-MEN SUDDENLY BEHOLD...

LUCIFER! AND--*PROFESSOR X!*

THEN I WAS *RIGHT!* THE MESSAGES WERE *TRUE!*

BUT--*WERE* THEY, CYCLOPS? THE PROFESSOR'S SO STILL--SO *UNMOVING*--ALMOST AS IF HE'S UNDER LUCIFER'S *MENTAL DOMINATION!*

I MUST CONCUR, MY BIRD-LIKE BUDDY, THAT YOUR DIAGNOSIS SEEMS MOST *PROBABLE!*

THAT *MUST* BE IT! OTHERWISE, WHY WOULD HE JUST SIT THERE--STARING UNSEEINGLY AHEAD--INSTEAD OF CONTACTING US *AGAIN?*

THINK WHAT YOU *WILL*, FOOLS! NO MATTER WHAT ACTIONS YOU MAY TAKE, YOU ARE DOOMED TO *FAIL* AGAINST A SCIENCE THAT COMES FROM THE *STARS!*

DID YOU HEAR *THAT?* HE'S *GOTTA* BE REFERRING TO THIS MONSTROUS PIECE OF MACHINERY!

IT'S A *TRICK*, I TELL YOU! HE'S TRYING TO *CONFUSE* US--!

AND, IN YOUR CASE, HE *SUCCEEDED*, CHUM!

STILL WHAT ARE WE GOING TO *DO?* TIME IS SO *SHORT!*

AND GETTING *SHORTER*, FEMALE! LOOK--OUR ALIEN ANTAGONIST IS SCURRYING FOR A *WEAPON!*

OH NO YOU DON'T, LUCIFER! I'LL USE YOUR OWN *CLOAK* TO STOP YOU!

CURSE YOU, MARVEL GIRL! MY *ROBOTS* WILL YET DESTROY YOU ALL!

MAYBE--AND MAYBE *NOT!* I'LL KEEP YOU SO TANGLED IN YOUR CAPE THAT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO *CALL* THEM!

16

AT THAT SAME INSTANT...

THAT *TEARS* IT! I'M RIPPING UP EVERYTHING I *CAN* BEFORE LUCIFER'S METALLIC ERRAND-BOYS SHOW UP!

NO--YOU *CAN'T!* THE PROFESSOR SAID THE RESULTS WOULD BE *DISASTROUS!*

BUT DISASTROUS FOR *WHO*--US, OR *LUCIFER?* SORRY, CYKE, BUT I'M WITH *ANGEL* THIS GO-ROUND!

ANGEL--COME *BACK!*

DON'T FORCE ME TO *STOP* YOU!

NO USE! HE WON'T LISTEN! THEN--I HAVE NO *CHOICE*--!

THUS, BEFORE THE UNBELIEVING EYES OF HIS FELLOW X-MEN, THE DEPUTY LEADER *FIRES* ON THE FLYING FORM ABOVE...

UNHHNNN--!

HE *DID* IT! CYCLOPS STOPPED THE ANGEL--JUST BEFORE HE COULD REACH THOSE WIRES!

ZAK!

STUNNED--CAN'T *FLY*--!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOTTEN *INTO* CYCLOPS--

BUT, HERE'S WHERE I KNOCK IT *OUTTA* HIM!

OH! I CAN'T SLOW HIM *DOWN* FAST ENOUGH!

NEVER FEAR--FOR THE *BEAST* IS HERE! BETWEEN THE *TWO* OF US, WE'LL BREAK HIS FALL!

AND, EVEN AS HANK McCOY LITHELY CATCHES THE PLUMMETING ANGEL, AN ANGRY *ICEMAN* HURLS HIS OWN FRIGID WEAPON--ONLY TO SEE...

THERE! MY *TELEKINETIC POWER* HAS DEFLECTED THAT CHUNK OF ICE!

THAP!

MARVEL GIRL! ARE YOU OUTTA YOUR *TREE?*

ARE YOU GONNA LET HIM GET AWAY WITH RAY-BEAMING THE *ANGEL?*

USE YOUR *EYES,* ICEMAN, LIKE *JEAN* DID! SHE KNOWS I ONLY *DAZED* ANGEL--HE'LL BE ALRIGHT IN A MINUTE!

CAN'T YOU *SEE?* ALL OF *MANKIND* IS AT STAKE--WHILE WE BATTLE AMONG *OURSELVES!*

ALL *I* SEE IS THAT YOU BLASTED ANGEL TO PROTECT THIS *MACHINE!*

NO, BOBBY! HE WAS JUST OBEYING *ORDERS!* PROFESSOR XAVIER KNOWS BETTER THAN *WE* DO HOW TO COMBAT *DOMINUS*... AND *LUCIFER!*

IF, INDEED, IT *WAS* THE PROFESSOR WHO CONTACTED US MENTALLY--WHICH I *DOUBT!*

Read more FREE comics on ReadComicOnline

AND, FURTHERMORE, I--

WHAT'S THAT *SOUND* BEHIND ME?

BEAST! LOOK OUT! IT'S ONE OF THE *ROBOTS!*

I DIDN'T *THINK* IT WAS *SOUPY* SALES!

WHILE, BELOW, A MANIACAL LAUGH ARISES FROM THE THROAT OF THE FALLEN *LUCIFER*, FREE AT LAST OF MARVEL GIRL'S TELEKINETIC ATTACK...

GOOD! THE FIRST OF MY FIVE SURVIVING ROBOTS DIVES FOR THE KILL!

DESTROY THE MORTALS, ROBOT *DELTA*--AT ANY PRICE!

NOT *ONE* OF THE ACCURSED X-MEN MUST REMAIN *ALIVE!*

HOWEVER, EVEN BEFORE THE ANGERED ALIEN CAN FINISH...

SKRAK!

A NOBLE TRY, MY FRENZIED FRIEND--BUT IT'S OBVIOUS YOU DO NOT POSSESS THE AMAZING AGILITY OF NIMBLE *BEAST!*

HOLY SMOKE! THE ROBOT WAS COMPLETELY *DEMOLISHED*--AND THE MACHINE WAS *UNHARMED!*

BUT, I DON'T *UNDERSTAND!*

WHY DID THE ROBOT ATTACK SO *RECKLESSLY* THAT IT WAS *DESTROYED?*

THAT'S *IT*--THE SECRET OF THE PROFESSOR'S *TELEPATHIC WARNING!* --

UH OH! SAVE IT FOR *LATER*, SCOTTY BOY! *HERE COMES ANOTHER ONE--*

--AND, IT'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR *ANGEL!*

DUCK, WARREN!

I--*CAN'T MOVE!* MY WINGS--STILL *NUMB!*

FIRST, THE HELPLESS ONE--AND THEN THE *OTHERS!*

THEN, AS TWO POWERFUL METAL HANDS REACH OUT FOR THE STRICKEN X-MAN...

ZIT!

THANKS, CYKE! YOU CAME THRU IN A *PINCH!*

THAT ALMOST MAKES ME FORGET THAT *YOU* MADE ME SUCH A VULNERABLE TARGET IN THE *FIRST* PLACE!

Read more FREE comics on ReadComicOnline

I--CAN'T EXPLAIN THAT NOW, WARREN! THAT INTENSE ENERGY-BLAST LEFT ME WEAK, ALSO!

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW SORRY I AM TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, CYKE--'CAUSE HERE COME THE REMAINING THREE ROBOTS--MOVIN' FAST!

QUICKLY, BOBBY--A CURVED ICE SHIELD! IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE!

HURRY, ANGEL!

RIGHT! EVERYBODY ON THIS PLATFORM--ON THE DOUBLE!

LOOK! THE ROBOTS--THEY'RE FIRING SIMULTANEOUS RAYS AT US FROM THEIR FINGER-TIPS!

ZZ ZZZZ

LUCIFER COMMANDS US TO ATTACK WITH FULL FORCE! DESTROY --DESTROY!!

THEN, ASTOUNDINGLY...

THOOOM!

IT--IT WORKED! MY ICE SHIELD DEFLECTED THEIR DEADLY RAYS, SO THAT THEY HIT THE MACHINE--AND IT FIRED THEM BACK AT LUCIFER'S MECHANICAL CHUMS!

JUST THINK--IF THE SHIELD HADN'T BEEN CURVED, THE BLASTS WOULD HAVE HIT MORE SOLIDLY--AND PROBABLY BROKEN THRU!

PERISH THE THOUGHT!

BELOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE CONFLICT BEGAN, PROFESSOR X SPEAKS...

YOUR ROBOTS ARE FINISHED, LUCIFER! YOUR SCHEME IS ENDED!

IT WAS YOUR DOING, XAVIER--YOU AND YOUR ACCURSED X-MEN! BUT, I SHALL YET LIVE TO HAVE MY REVENGE!

WAIT! THAT NOISE--THE SUPREME ONE CALLS!

BLEEP... BLEEP... BLEEP... BLEEP...

SLOWLY, HALTINGLY, LIKE A MAN IN A DREAM, THE DEFEATED ALIEN MOUNTS THE DAIS BEFORE A GIANT SCREEN...

AGENT ONE--WHY HAVE THE ACTI-SIGNALS FROM THE ROBOTS CEASED?

IT IS BECAUSE --THEY HAVE BEEN DEMOLISHED, SUPREME ONE--BY AN ADVANCED BAND OF EARTHLINGS!

I HAVE NO EXCUSES--I ONLY ASK FOR MERCY AT YOUR HANDS!

MERCY? YOU DARE ASK MERCY AFTER SACRIFICING THE ULTRA-ROBOTS WITHOUT WHICH DOMINUS IS USELESS-- WITHOUT WHICH OUR OTHER ENSLAVED WORLDS WILL RISE IN REVOLT?

THIS, THEN, SHALL BE YOUR FATE! YOU SHALL BE BANISHED TO A NAMELESS DIMENSION WHERE NEITHER TIME NOR SPACE EXISTS!

NO--NO! YOU CANNOT SENTENCE ME THUS--AFTER I HAVE GIVEN YOU CONQUESTS FOR COUNTLESS YEARS! YOU CANNOT--!

PROFESSOR--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WE WERE AFRAID--

YES, I AM FINE, HANK--BUT I'M AFRAID LUCIFER WON'T BE, IN A FEW SECONDS!

THE NEXT MOMENT, THERE IS A SUDDEN BLINDING GLARE-- A TUMULTUOUS RUSHING OF AIR-- AND...

SNOOOSH

I'M VANISHING--BEING HURLED INTO ETERNAL EXILE! HELP ME, X-MEN--HELP ME!

THE SHAFT OF LIGHT-- IT REAPPEARED!

DOMINUS IS BEING DRAWN BACK INTO SPACE--AND LUCIFER IS FADING INTO NOTHINGNESS! THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO!

THEN, AS THE BEAM FADES AWAY, A WEARY PROFESSOR XAVIER ANSWERS THE UNSPOKEN QUESTIONS OF HIS WEARY CHARGES...

MY PROBING REVEALED THAT DOMINUS WOULD RESIST ALL YOUR EFFORTS TO DESTROY IT, HURLING BACK ANY FORCE USED AGAINST IT! THAT IS WHY I TOLD YOU TO CONCENTRATE ON THE ROBOTS, WHO WERE INDISPENSABLE TO ITS OPERATION!

MEANWHILE, I MANAGED TO PIERCE LUCIFER'S MENTAL SCREEN AT CLOSE RANGE AND LED HIM TO COMMAND THE ROBOTS TOO RECKLESSLY!

THEN, THAT'S WHY YOU SEEMED SO DISTANT, AS IF YOU WERE UNDER HIS CONTROL!

CORRECT, ANGEL! I COULD NOT AFFORD TO RELAX MY WILL POWER LONG ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN THINGS FURTHER TO YOU!

AND SO...

WE SAVED THE CAUSE OF HUMAN FREEDOM ON EARTH, PROFESSOR--AND NEVER LEARNED FROM WHERE OUR ENEMY CAME!

TRUE, CYCLOPS--

BUT STILL, WE WON! AND THAT, AFTER ALL, IS THE ONLY THING OF IMPORTANCE!

NEXT ISSUE: COUNT NEFARIA! 'NUFF SAID!

MINUTEMEN

Blunt

Brian Azzarello